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ABSTRACT

Two national surveys, one of youth ages 12 to 19 and the other of adults over age 19 years, examined attitudes toward teen pregnancy. Respondents express more cautious attitudes toward early and casual sex than is generally believed, and large majorities of both groups support a strong abstinence message for teens coupled with information about the benefits and limitations of contraception. Sexually experienced teens report wishing they had waited. Parents continue to underestimate their influence on teens. Morals, values, and religious beliefs are very influential. Many teens are not getting the message that teen pregnancy is problematic, and many still believe it will not happen to them. Many teens express ambivalence regarding their feelings about getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant. The majority of adults and teens wish that the entertainment media would more often present the consequences of sex, including teen pregnancy. Significant majorities of both groups believe that teen pregnancy prevention programs should teach youth to be married before having children. Nine out of ten teens say it would be much easier to delay sex if other teens spoke positively about not having sex. Half of the boys feel they often receive the message that sex and pregnancy are not a big deal. (Contains 23 charts). (SM)

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THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

With One Voice 2002:

America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy

An Annual National Survey

December 2002

UD 035 474

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OVERVIEW

The National Campaign has been conducting and releasing survey data since our inception in 1996. These periodic surveys have provided valuable insight into how adults and teens view a wide range of issues related to preventing teen pregnancy. Last year the Campaign released *With One Voice*, our most comprehensive survey work to date and the first in a series of annual surveys asking Americans a consistent, core set of questions. Through yearly national surveys — made possible through the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation — we hope both to capture a snapshot of what adults and teens think about teen pregnancy and related issues and to provide a more long-range view of how their attitudes are evolving. This publication, *With One Voice 2002*, marks our second survey in the series.

We have undertaken nationally representative annual surveys for two primary reasons. First, one of the explicit goals of the Campaign is to influence the "national conversation" regarding teen pregnancy. Consequently, it is essential that we regularly assess the content and direction of this conversation and share the results with policymakers, state and local leaders, practitioners, and parents and teens themselves. A second equally important reason to conduct regular surveys of public *attitudes* in this field is to supplement the *behavioral* data already collected regularly by the federal government (each year, for example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides national statistics on teen births, and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System provides important behavioral data regarding young people enrolled in school). Since changes in attitudes can often signal changes in behavior — and given the importance the Campaign places on changing social norms on this issue — regularly assessing adult and teen attitudes toward teen sex and pregnancy over time is a key component of understanding the teen pregnancy challenge and taking effective action to reduce it.

With One Voice 2002 offers interesting insights about teen sex and pregnancy, factors that might influence teens' decisions about sex, and advice to parents, program leaders, and policymakers. In general, the findings suggest that adults — and teens, in particular — express more cautious attitudes toward early and casual sex than perhaps is generally believed. The survey results also indicate that large majorities of both adults and teens support a strong abstinence message for teens coupled with information about the benefits and limitations of contraception.

The complete results of the survey, including the methodology used in conducting the survey, the exact wording of the questions, and the detailed responses of adults and teens, follow this introduction. (This publication and all previous Campaign polling can be found on the Campaign's website — www.teenpregnancy.org.)

Highlights from the survey include the following:

Adults *and* teens believe that teens should receive a strong abstinence message. Nearly all of those surveyed (94% of adults and 93% of teens — essentially unchanged from last year) believe it is important that teens be given a strong message from society that they should abstain from sex until they are at least out of high school.

"Abstinence-first" yes. "Abstinence-only" no. Support for a strong abstinence message for teens does *not* mean Americans support an "abstinence-only" message for teens. Most American adults and teens share the common sense view that abstinence is the first and best option for teens but also strongly believe that teens should be given information about contraception. Some 66% of adults and 56% of teens believe teens should not be sexually active but those who are should have access to birth control. While the majority of Americans support this middle-ground position, the survey also reveals that there is *more* support this year than last year for the idea that teens should not be sexually active and should not have access to birth control (15% of adults supported this position in 2001, 23% support it this year) and *less* support of the position that it's okay for teens to be sexually active, as long as they have access to birth control (12% of adults

supported this position in 2001, only 9% say they support it this year).

Americans want more of both, not either/or. Our survey this year also reveals that substantial majorities of adults (76%) and teens (64%) think that teens should get more information about abstinence *and* birth control rather than just one or the other. When asked what advice they would offer policymakers regarding teen pregnancy, a significant majority of adults (63%) and teens (68%) say they would place greater emphasis on encouraging teens not to have sex *and* greater emphasis on birth control (also, essentially unchanged from last year).

Americans reject the "mixed message" argument. Some argue that stressing abstinence to teens while also providing them with information about contraception sends teens a confusing, mixed message. Adults (66%) and teens (72%) disagree, calling such a message "clear and specific" (nearly unchanged from last year's survey).

Sexually experienced teens wish they had waited. Most teens who have had sex (63%) wish they had waited longer. Fully 70% of sexually experienced teen girls and 55% of sexually experienced teen guys report they wish they had waited longer to have sex.

Teens in general express cautious attitudes toward early and casual sex. Most teens (82%) believe that sex should only occur in a long-term, committed relationship. This is true for boys (81%) as well as girls (84%). Only 19% of teens think it's all right to have sex if two people have known each other for a short time. And 33% of adults and 28% of teens also say they have become more opposed to teens having sex over the past several years.

Parents continue to underestimate their influence. There continues to be a "parent-gap" when it comes to teens' decisions about sex. When asked who influences teens' decisions about sex the most, more adults cited teenagers' friends (30%) than any other source. Only 8% of teens, however, say friends are most influential. Younger teens (aged 12-14), in particular, cite parents as the most influential by a wide margin (31% cite parents as most influential, while only 8% say friends are most influential).

Parents matter. Nearly seven out of ten teens (69%) also agree that it would be much easier for them to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents. And one out of four teen girls say their parents have discussed sex, love, and relationships with them "not nearly enough."

Morals, values, and religious beliefs are also influential. Teens say morals, values, and/or religious beliefs influence their decisions about sex more than any of the other options offered by the question (parents, friends, the media, teachers and sex educators, and worries about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases).

Many teens are *not* getting the message that teen pregnancy is wrong. The percentage of adults who believe that young people are getting a clear message that teen pregnancy is wrong declined dramatically between 2001 and 2002 (from 63% to 48%). For their part, fully 16% of teens say they are *not* getting a clear message that teen pregnancy is wrong and an additional 25 percent of teens seem to be uncertain about the message they are getting.

Many teens still believe "it won't happen to me." Our survey makes clear that many teens simply have not made teen pregnancy an issue of personal concern. Over half of all teens we surveyed (54%) said they have never really thought about what their life would be like if they got pregnant or got someone pregnant. Perhaps not surprisingly, far more girls than boys have thought about becoming pregnant or causing a pregnancy as a teen.

Many young people are ambivalent about how they'd feel about getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant. Twenty-one percent of teens say they are either not determined or only somewhat determined to avoid getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy as a teen. This finding is particularly troublesome in light of research indicating that if young people are at all ambivalent about the importance of avoiding pregnancy, the risk of actually becoming pregnant is quite high.

Americans to the media: Show consequences. While most adults (57%) and teens (72%) believe that there has been more attention to teen pregnan-

cy prevention in the news and entertainment media in the past few years, the overwhelming majority of adults (88%) and teens (83%) wish the entertainment media more often presented the *consequences* of sex, including teen pregnancy.

Marriage should be discussed. Significant majorities of adults (86%) and teens (84%) believe that teen pregnancy prevention programs should teach young people to be married before having children.

Positive peer influence. Nine out of ten teens (91%) say it would be a lot easier for teens to delay sex if other teens spoke positively about not having sex.

It's different for guys. Although teen boys and girls generally express similar feelings and beliefs about teen pregnancy and related issues, our survey reveals several pronounced differences. For instance, five out of ten teen boys (51%) say they often receive the message that sex and pregnancy are "not a big deal." Teen boys are also more likely than teen girls to say that it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins.

It is our hope that those concerned with preventing adolescent pregnancy can use these data in various ways to advance their important work. For example, several communities have conducted their own local polling and compared their results with our national results, and many in the field have told us that survey data such as these are particularly useful when interacting with politicians, business people, or others who are not already focused on teen pregnancy and who do not think that the issue is relevant to them.

One final note: The results of this year's survey clearly confirm one of the primary findings from last year's survey. That is, the overwhelming majority of Americans hold very practical, common sense views about how best to prevent too-early pregnancy and parenthood — they support a strong emphasis on abstinence as the best option for teens by far, coupled with information about contraception. They continue to reject the notion that it's either abstinence or contraception. Unfortunately, these middle-ground views are often drowned-out by the polarizing arguments surrounding the contentious issue of teen pregnancy. We hope that this survey serves as a much needed reminder that adults and teens, more often than not, speak "with one voice" on this issue and that this voice of reasonable consensus is not often reflected in the heated arguments over this issue. In our view, the results of the survey make clear that the public holds very reasonable views about the best means to help our young people delay pregnancy and childbearing until they are adults.

NOTE TO THE READER

Readers will note that some of the following charts present data from both 2001 and 2002 Campaign surveys while some only present data from 2002. This is because some questions were posed to adults and teens both years, while some were asked for the first time this year. Campaign survey questions prior to 2001 are noted where relevant.

Readers will also note that some of the responses to various questions do not quite total 100 percent. For the sake of clarity and simplicity we chose not to display the percentages of respondents that answered "don't know" or refused to answer.

METHODOLOGY

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy's survey, *With One Voice II: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy*, is based on two national surveys, one of young people age 12-19 and the other of adults age 20 and over. Of the adults interviewed, 77 percent were parents. The survey was designed by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy with assistance from International Communications Research (ICR).

The teen survey is weighted to provide a nationally representative estimate of young people age 12-19. Field work for this survey was conducted in August 2002. Telephone interviews were conducted by ICR with 1,001 young people. The sample for this study was drawn using two different methods. The first sample source used Random Digit Dial (RDD). RDD numbers are drawn from telephone households throughout the continental United States. As a second sample source, a database of households with teenagers 12-19 years old was tapped. This second sample was designed by Marketing Systems Group of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, a sister company to ICR. All interviews were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system ensures that all questions were rotated and that when answer options were presented, they were also rotated. This rotating eliminates "question position" bias. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.41%.

The adult survey is also weighted to provide a nationally representative estimate of the adult population, 20 years and older. Field work for this survey was conducted in July 2002. Telephone interviews were conducted by ICR with 1,017 adults. This survey was done as part of a national twice-weekly telephone omnibus survey using a fully-replicated, stratified, single-stage RDD sample of telephone households. Sample telephone numbers are computer-generated. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.74%.

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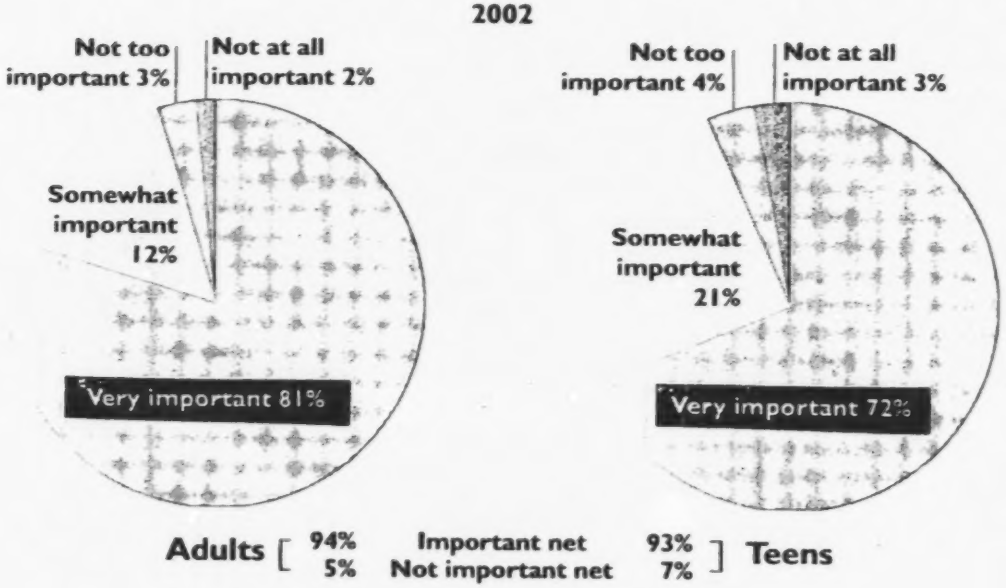
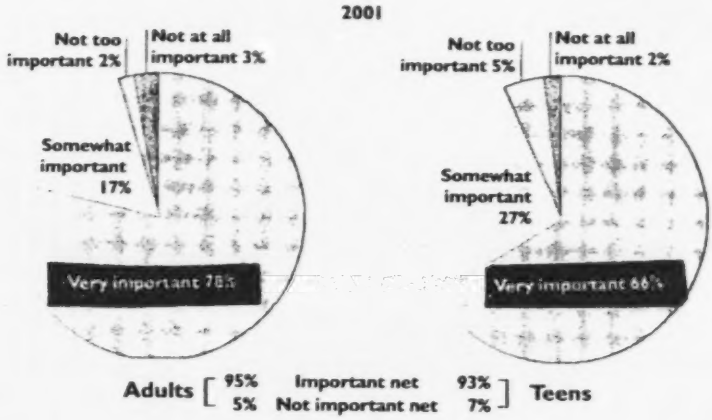
MESSAGES:
CHART ONE

How important do you think it is for teens to be given a strong message from society that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school?


2002
Not too important 3%
Not at all important 2%
Somewhat important 12%
Very important 81%
Not too important 4%
Not at all important 3%
Somewhat important 21%
Very important 72%
Adults [94% Important net 93%] Teens
5% Not important net 7%


2001
Not too important 2%
Not at all important 3%
Somewhat important 17%
Very important 78%
Not too important 5%
Not at all important 2%
Somewhat important 27%
Very important 66%
Adults [95% Important net 93%] Teens
5% Not important net 7%

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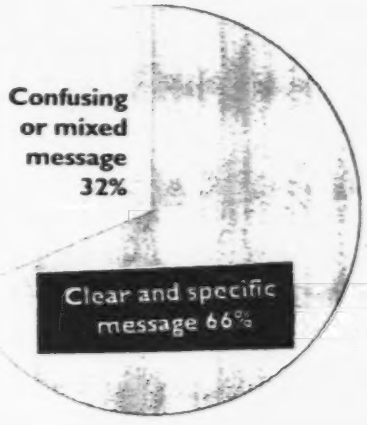
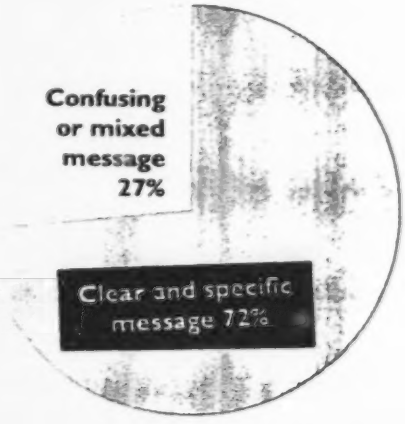
MESSAGES:
CHART TWO

Suppose a parent or other adult tells a teenager the following: "I feel very strongly that not having sex at all during your middle and high school years is your best option and the right thing to do. I also think it is important for you to receive information about birth control or protection. But again, I think not having sex is your best option." Do you think this is a clear and specific message or do you think it is a confusing or mixed message?

2002



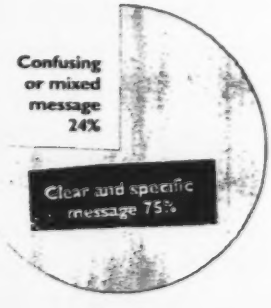
Adults



Teens

2001

Adults



Teens

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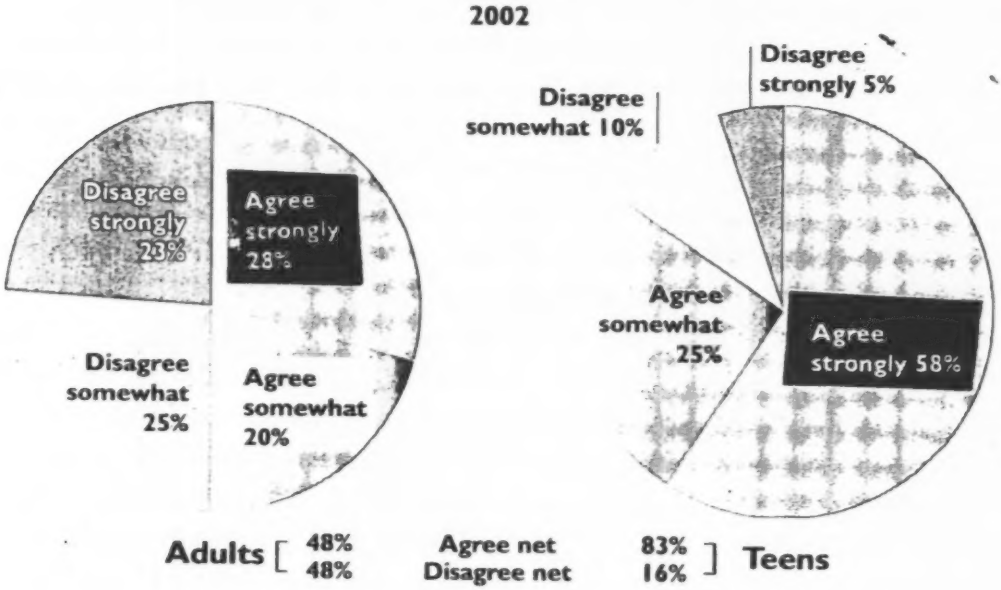
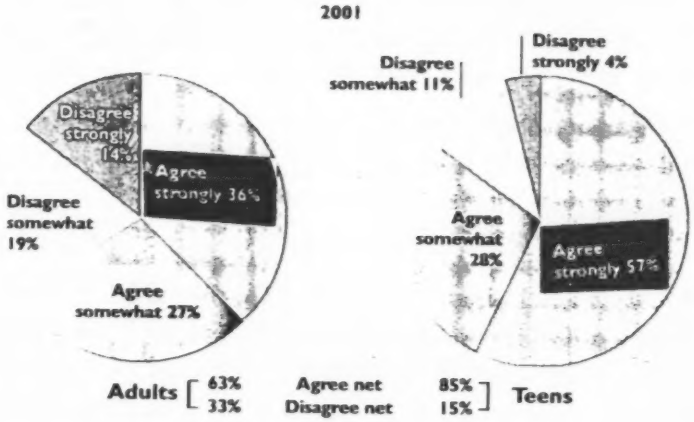
MESSAGES:
CHART THREE

(I'm getting/teenagers are getting) a clear message that teen pregnancy is wrong.





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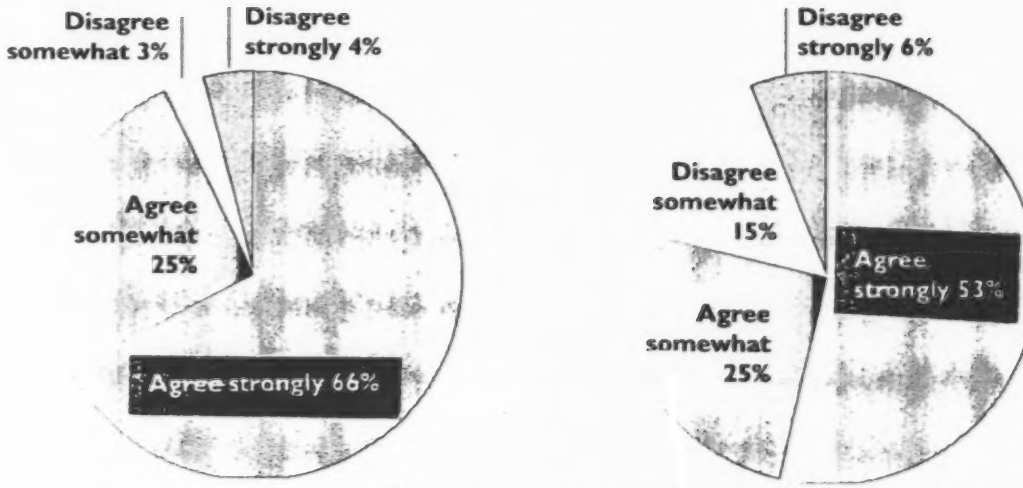
MESSAGES:
CHART THREE

(Continued)

2002



Teens age 12-14 [91% Agree net / 7% Disagree net] 78% Agree net / 21% Disagree net **Teens age 15-19**

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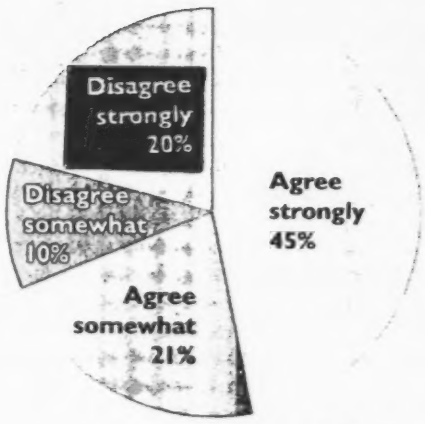
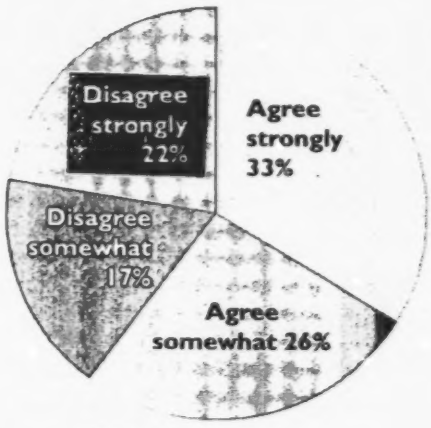
MESSAGES:
CHART FOUR

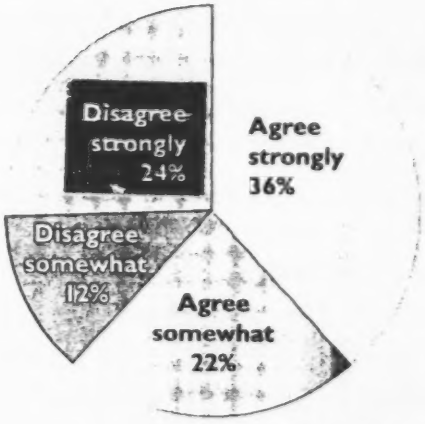
Teen boys often receive the message that sex and pregnancy is not a big deal.

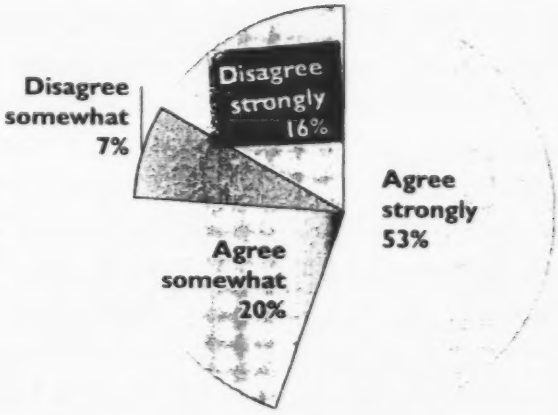
2002





Adults [66% Agree net / 29% Disagree net] 59% Agree net / 39% Disagree net **Teens**





Adult males [59% Agree net / 36% Disagree net] 73% Agree net / 23% Disagree net **Adult females**

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MESSAGES:
CHART FOUR

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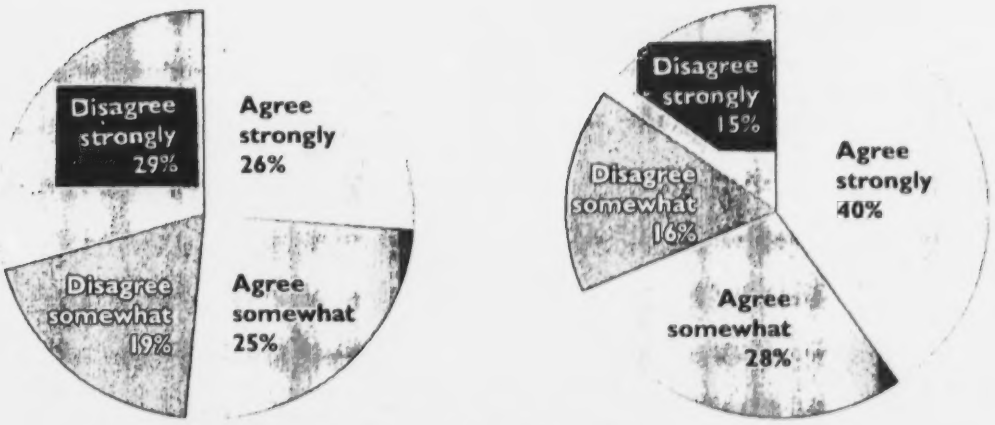

Teen males [51% Agree net 68%] **Teen females**
48% Disagree net 30%

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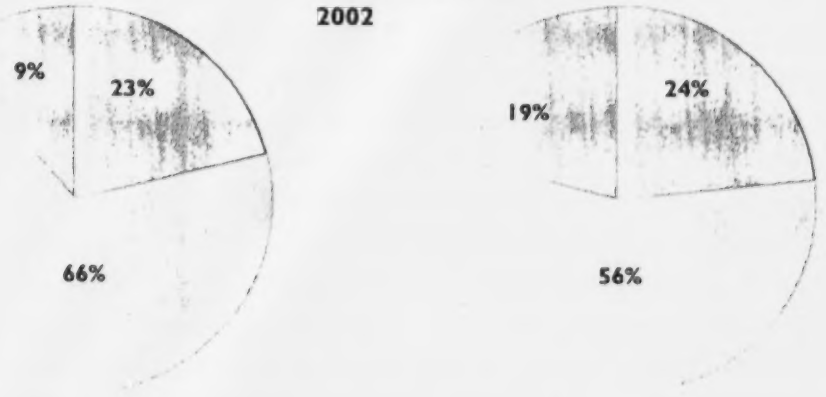
BELIEFS:
CHART FIVE

I'm going to read you three statements about teens and sex. Please tell me which one comes closest to your view.

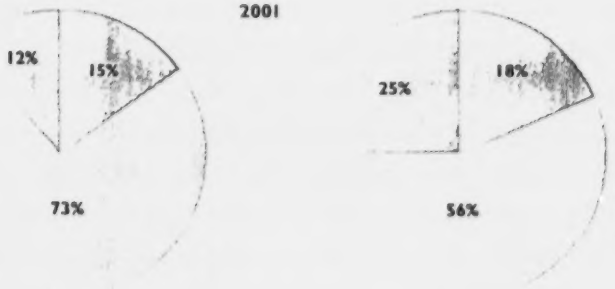
2002



Adults **Teens**

	Adults	Teens
Teens should not be sexually active and should not have access to birth control	23%	24%
Teens should not be sexually active, but teens who are should have access to birth control	66%	56%
It's okay for teens to be sexually active as long as they have access to birth control	9%	19%

2001

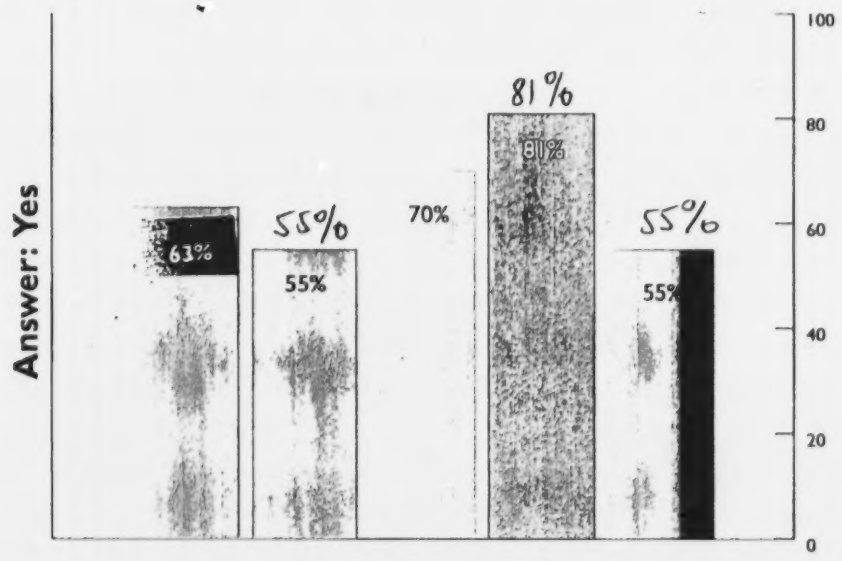


Adults **Teens**

	Adults	Teens
Teens should not be sexually active and should not have access to birth control	15%	18%
Teens should not be sexually active, but teens who are should have access to birth control	73%	56%
It's okay for teens to be sexually active as long as they have access to birth control	12%	25%

BELIEFS:
CHART SIX

If you have had sexual intercourse, do you wish you had waited longer?



- **All sexually experienced teens**
- Sexually experienced male teens
- Sexually experienced female teens
- Sexually experienced teens aged 12-14
- Sexually experienced teens aged 15-19

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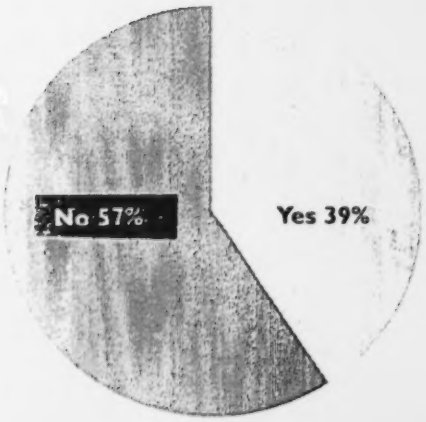
A Note About A Previous Campaign Survey:

When polled by the National Campaign in 2000, 63 percent of teens who have had sex (55 percent of boys and 72 percent of girls) wish they had waited longer. (The survey in 2000 canvassed teens aged 12-17; our poll this year is of teens aged 12-19).

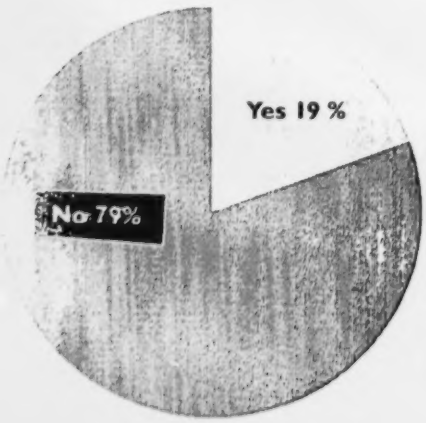
BELIEFS:
CHART SEVEN

Do you think it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins?

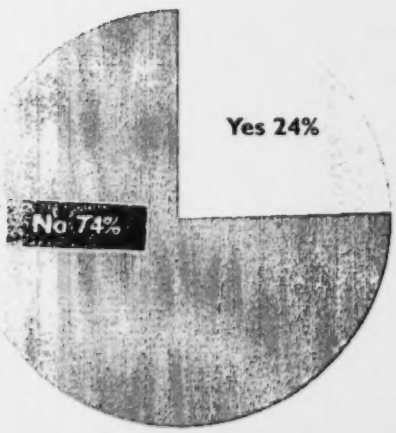
2002



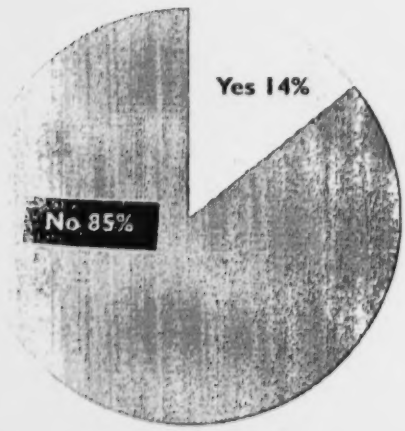
Adults



Teens



Teen males



Teen females

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BELIEFS:
CHART SEVEN

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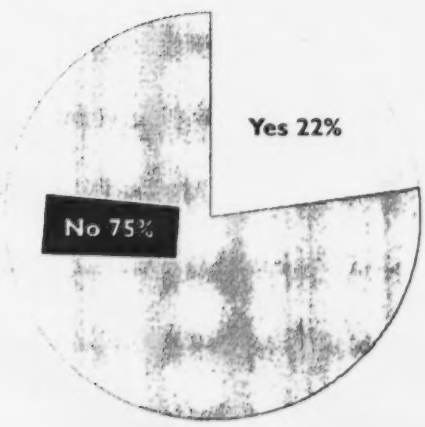
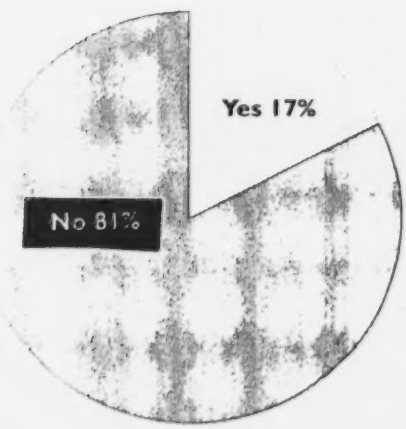


Teens age 12-14



Teens age 15-19

A Note About A Previous Campaign Survey:

When polled by the National Campaign in 2000, 11% of teens said that is was embarrassing for teens to admit they were virgins, while 87% said no. (The survey in 2000 canvassed teens aged 12-17, our poll this year is of teens aged 12-19).

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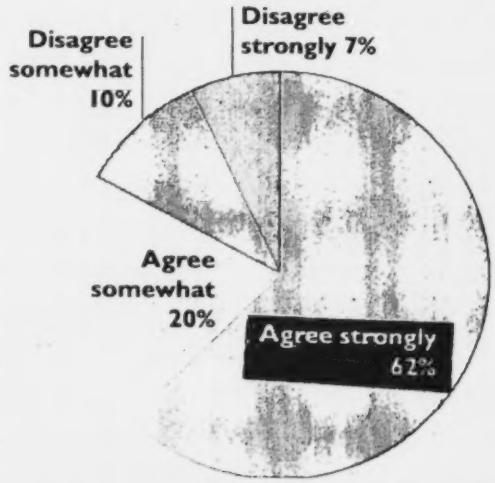
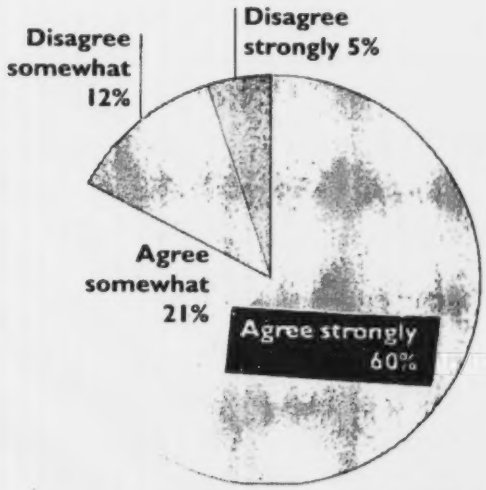
BELIEFS:
CHART EIGHT

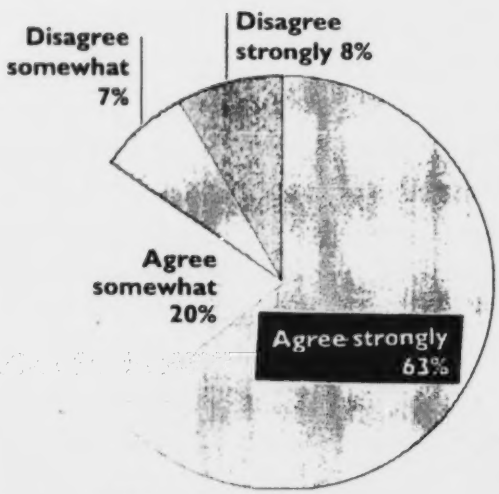
Personally, I believe that sex should only occur in a long-term, committed relationship.

2002



Teens [82% Agree net / 16% Disagree net





Teen males [81% / 17%] Agree net / Disagree net [84% / 15%] **Teen females**

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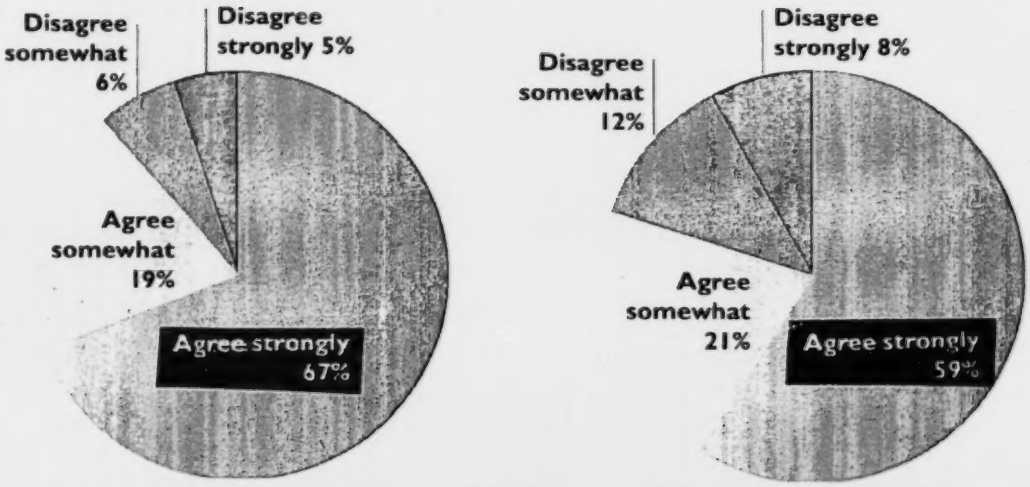
BELIEFS:
CHART EIGHT

(Continued)

2002



Teens age12-14 [86% Agree net / 12% Disagree net] 80% Agree net / 19% Disagree net **Teens age15-19**

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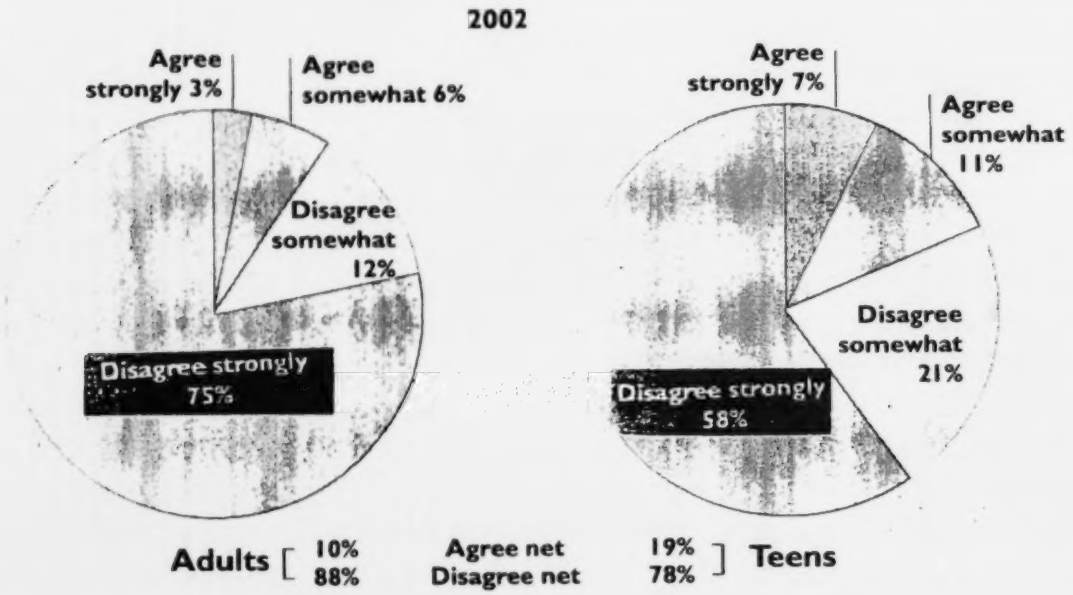
BELIEFS:
CHART NINE

It is all right to have sex if two people have known each other for a short time.



A Note About a Previous Survey:

This same survey question is asked of incoming college freshman in an annual survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Now in its 36th year, the UCLA Survey is generally recognized as the nation's longest-standing and most comprehensive assessment of student attitudes and plans. According to that survey, the proportion of college freshmen who agree that "it's all right to have sex if two people have known each other for a short time" declined from 52 percent in 1987 to 42 percent in 2001.

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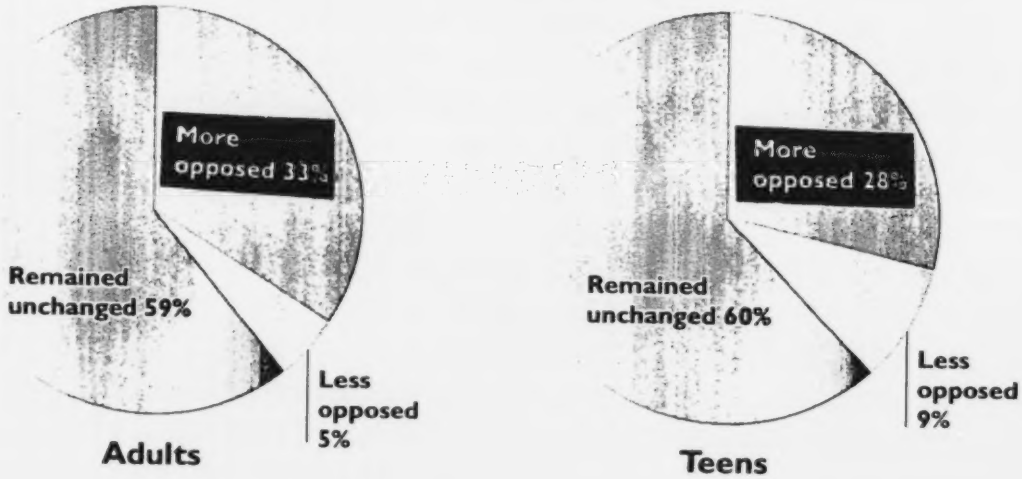
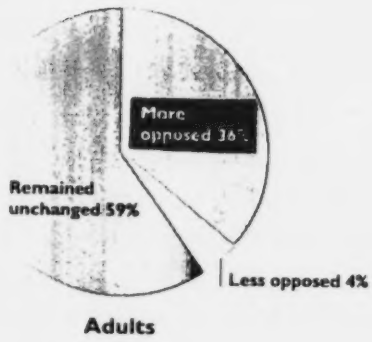
BELIEFS:
CHART TEN

When it comes to teens having sex, over the past several years, would you say that you have become more opposed, less opposed, or remained unchanged in your views?

2002



2001*



* Please note that this question was not asked of teens in 2001.

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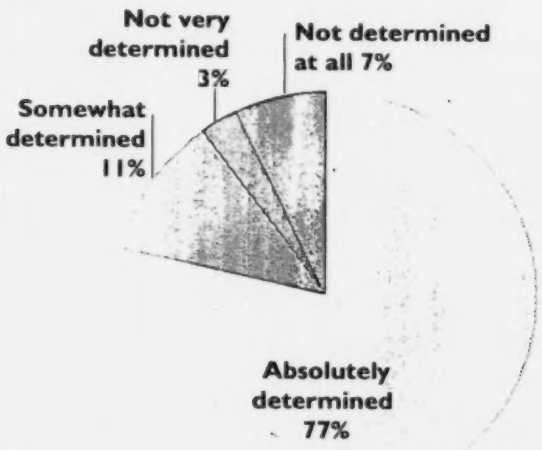
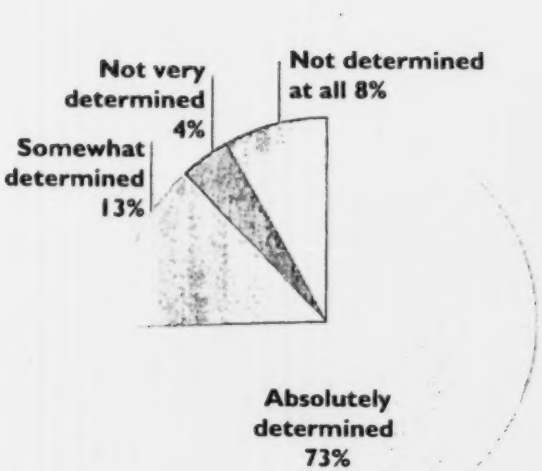
BELIEFS:
CHART ELEVEN

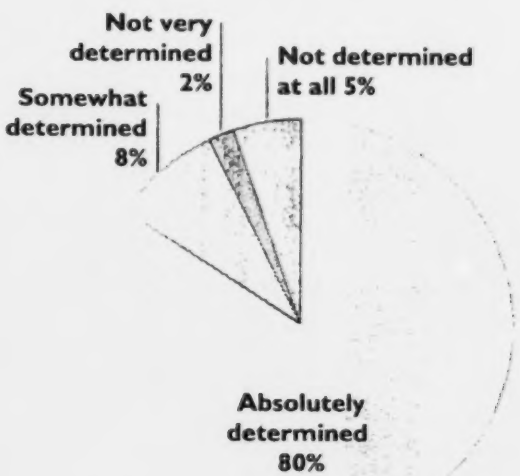
How determined are you to avoid getting pregnant/getting someone pregnant as a teen? Would you say you are...

2002



Teens [88% Determined net
10% Not determined net

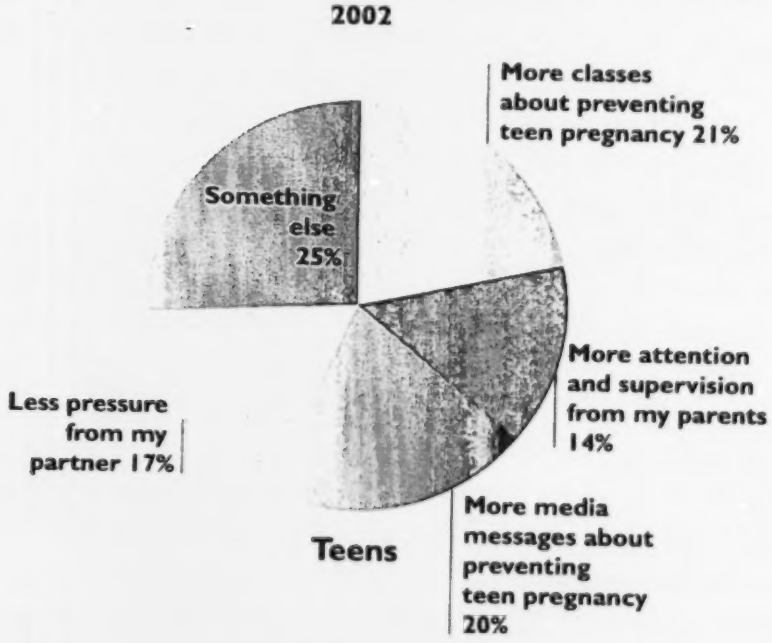




Teen males [86% Determined net 89%] **Teen females**
12% Not determined net 7%

INFLUENCES:
CHART TWELVE

Among the following options, what do you think would best help you avoid (becoming pregnant/causing a pregnancy) as a teen?


2002
More classes about preventing teen pregnancy 21%
Something else 25%
More attention and supervision from my parents 14%
Less pressure from my partner 17%
More media messages about preventing teen pregnancy 20%
Teens

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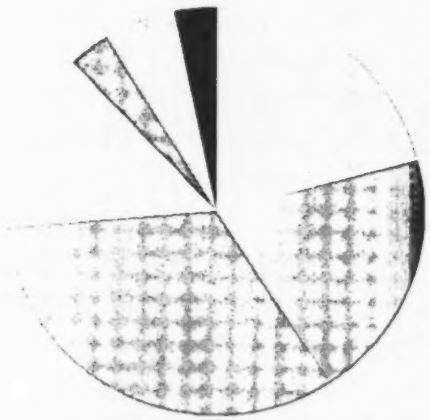
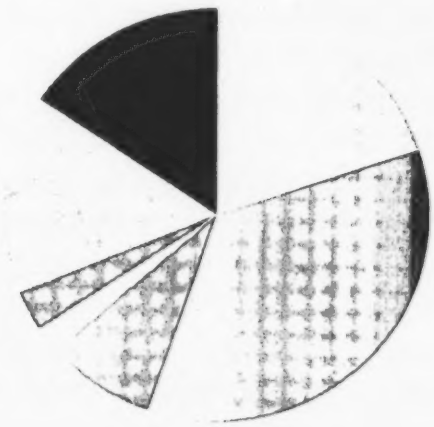
INFLUENCES:
CHART THIRTEEN

When it comes to (teens'/your) decisions about sex, which of the following influences (them/you) the most?

2002



Adults



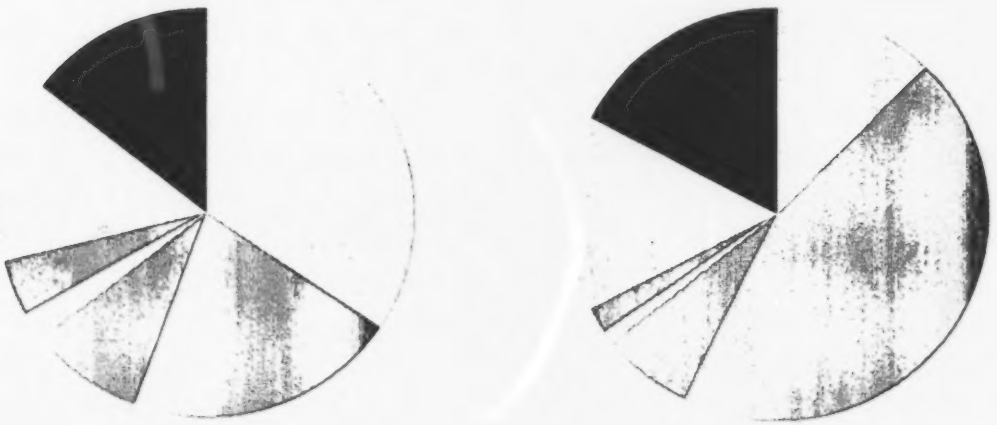
Teens

	Adults	Teens
Parents	19%	19%
Morals, values, and/or religious beliefs	18%	34%
Friends	30%	8%
The media	13%	2%
Teachers and sex educators	3%	3%
Worries about pregnancy	5%	15%
Worries about STDs	3%	15%

INFLUENCES:
CHART THIRTEEN

(Continued)

2002



Teens age 12-14 **Teens age 15-19**

	Teens Aged 12-14	Teens aged 15-19
Parents	31%	12%
Morals, values, and/or religious beliefs	19%	44%
Friends	8%	7%
The media	2%	1%
Teachers and sex educators	4%	2%
Worries about pregnancy	13%	15%
Worries about STDs	13%	17%

INFORMATION:
CHART FOURTEEN

Do you wish (teens/you) were getting more information about abstinence, more information about birth control (or "protection") or more information about both?

2002

Adults

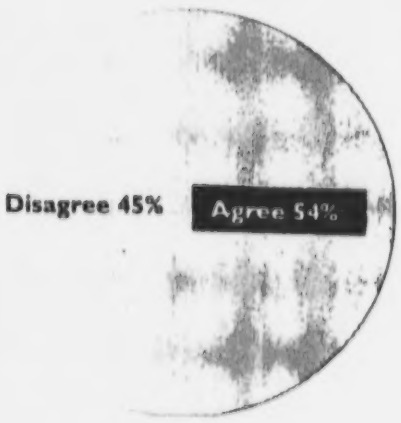
Teens

	Adults	Teens
More abstinence information	16%	10%
More information about birth control or protection	4%	12%
More of both	76%	64%

CONSEQUENCES: CHART FIFTEEN

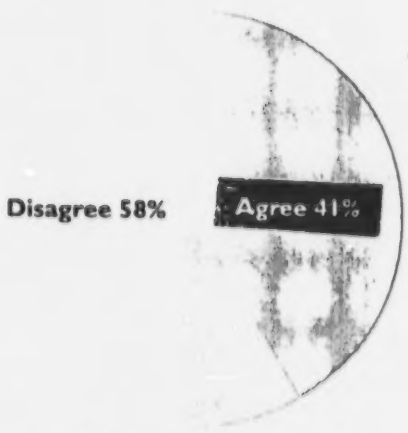
I have never really thought about what my life would be like if I (got pregnant/got someone pregnant) as a teen.

2002



Teens

Teen males age 15-19



Teen females age 15-19

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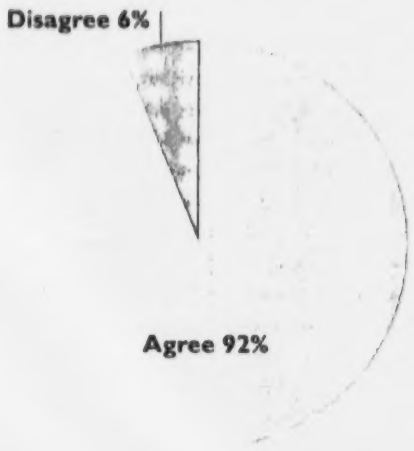
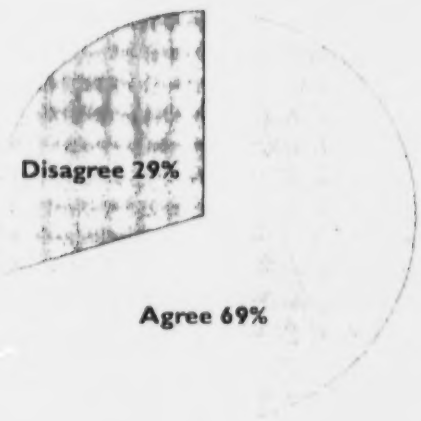
PARENTS:
CHART SIXTEEN

It would be much easier for (teens/me) to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they/I were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their/my parents.

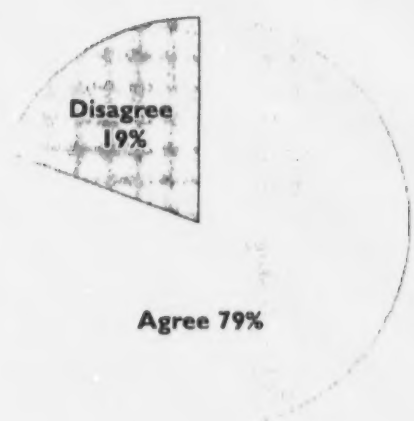
2002



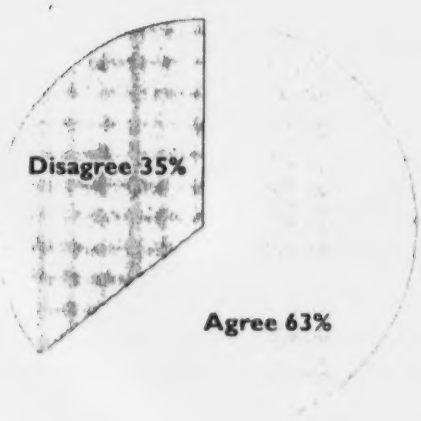
Adults



Teens



Teens age 12-14



Teens age 15-19

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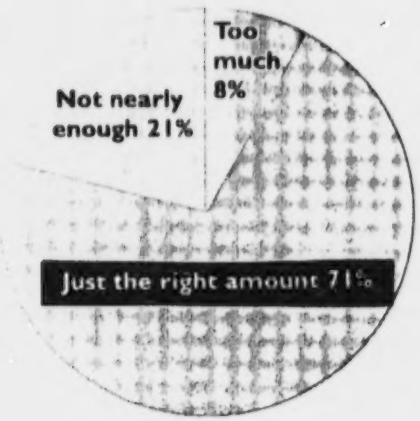
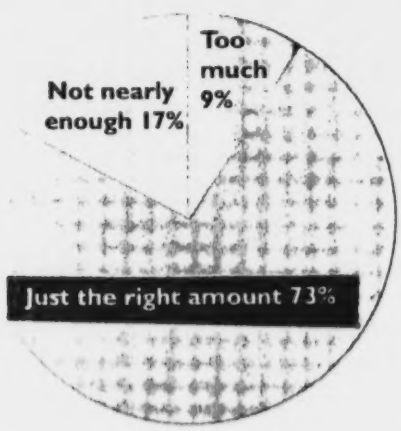
PARENTS:
CHART SEVENTEEN

Do you think your parents have discussed sex, love, and relationships with you too much, just the right amount, or not nearly enough?

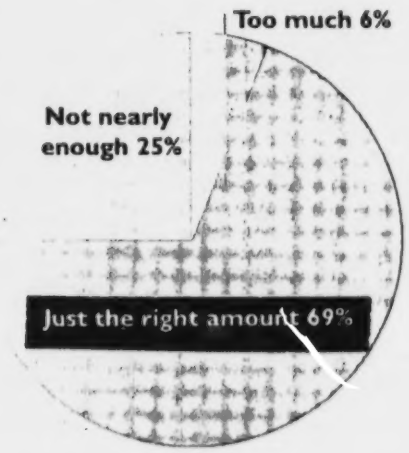
2002



Teens



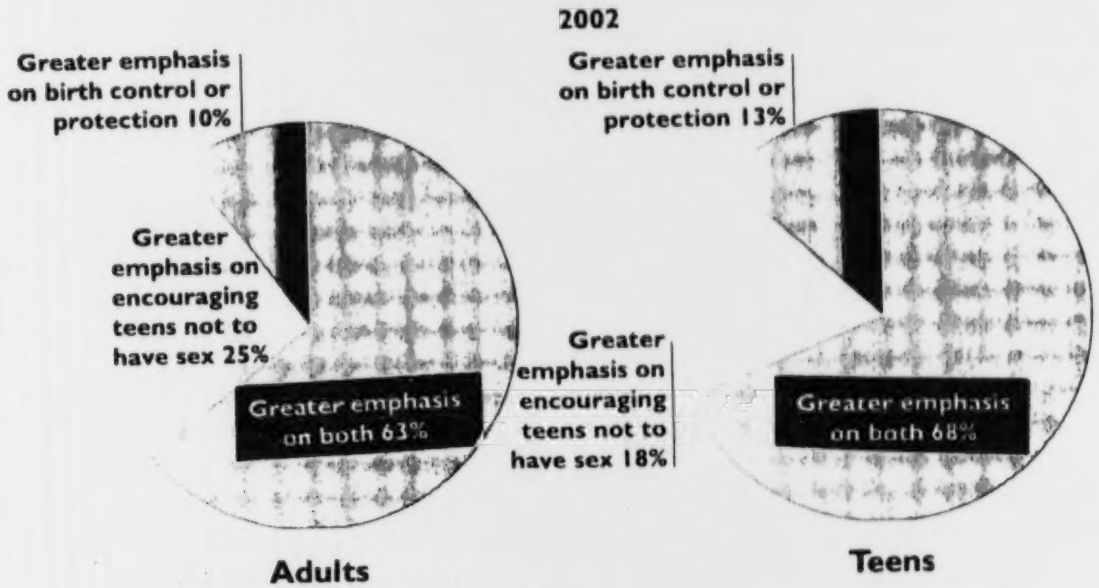
Teen males

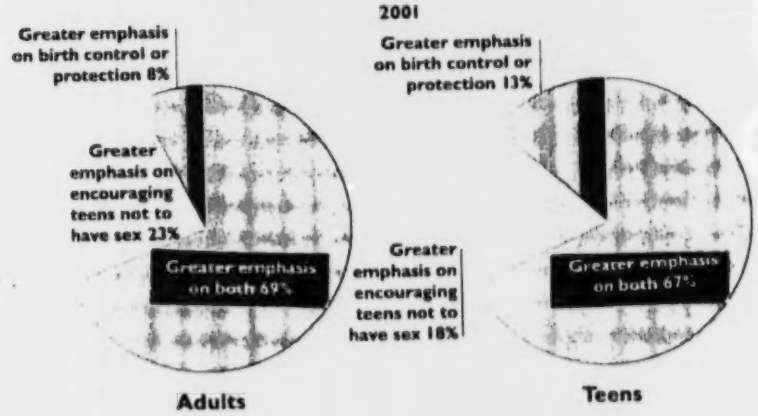


Teen females

POLICYMAKERS: CHART EIGHTEEN

If you were going to offer advice to policymakers in Washington regarding teen pregnancy, would it be greater emphasis on encouraging teens not to have sex, greater emphasis on birth control (or "protection") or more emphasis on both?


2002
Greater emphasis on birth control or protection 10%
Greater emphasis on encouraging teens not to have sex 25%
Greater emphasis on both 63%
Adults
Greater emphasis on birth control or protection 13%
Greater emphasis on encouraging teens not to have sex 18%
Greater emphasis on both 68%
Teens


2001
Greater emphasis on birth control or protection 8%
Greater emphasis on encouraging teens not to have sex 23%
Greater emphasis on both 69%
Adults
Greater emphasis on birth control or protection 13%
Greater emphasis on encouraging teens not to have sex 18%
Greater emphasis on both 67%
Teens

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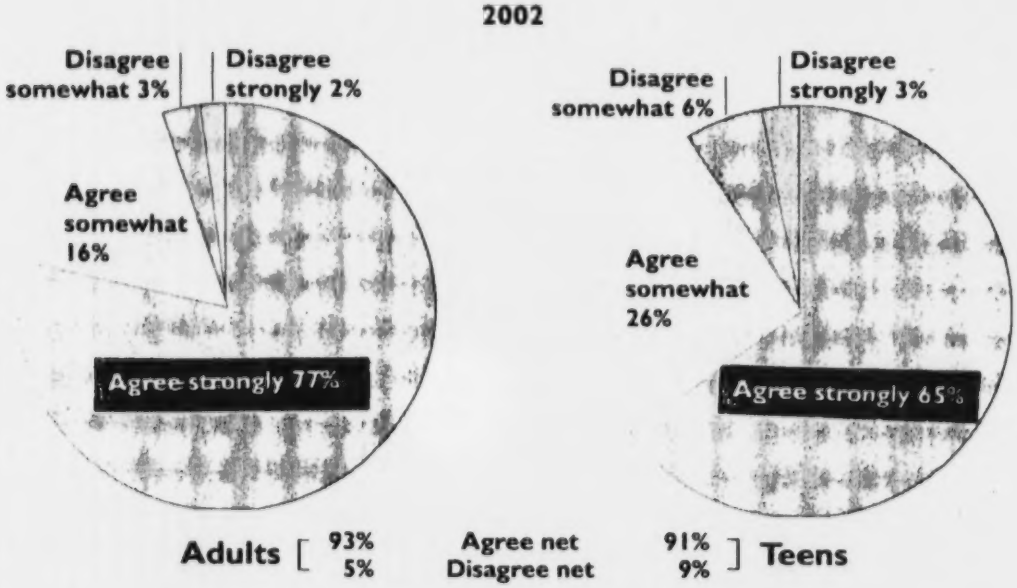
FRIENDS:
CHART NINETEEN

It would be a lot easier for teens to delay sex if other teens spoke positively about not having sex.



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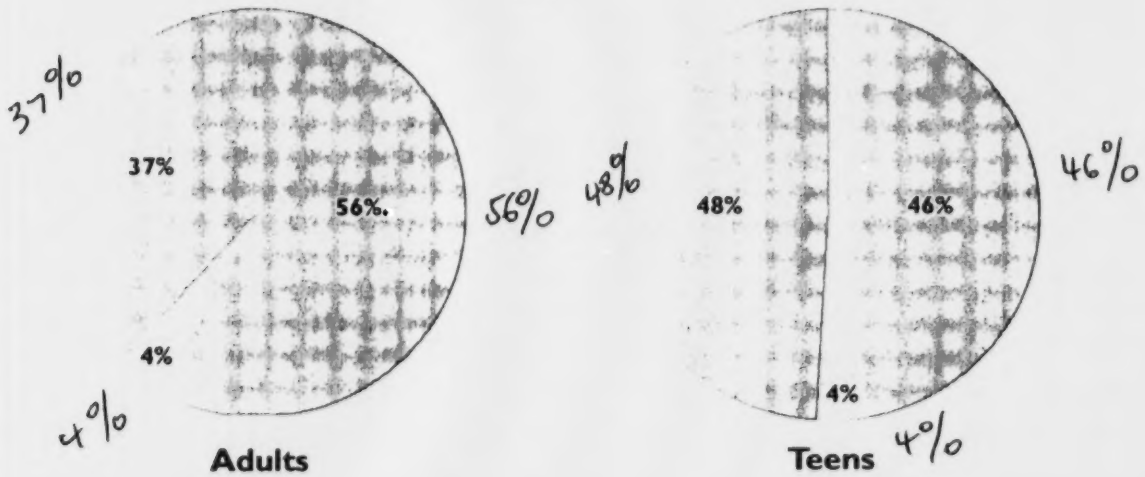
BUSINESSES:
CHART TWENTY

If you learned that a local business or a major corporation was involved in preventing teen pregnancy, would you be more inclined to support that business, less inclined to support that business, or would it not change your views of that business?

2002



	Adults	Teens
More inclined to support that business	56%	46%
Less inclined to support that business	4%	4%
It would not change my view of that business	37%	48%

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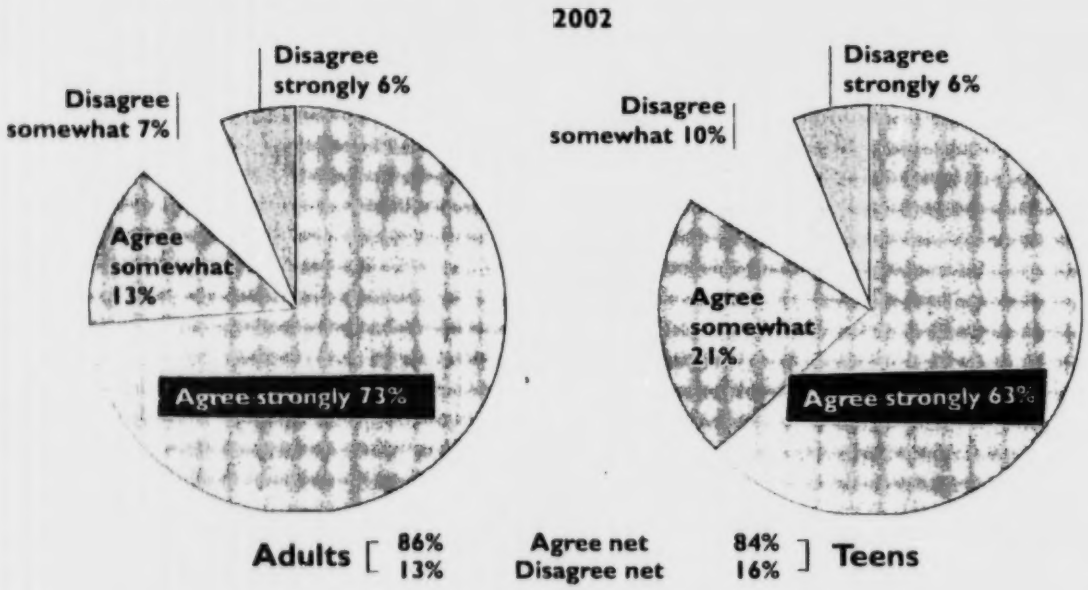
PROGRAMS:
CHART TWENTY ONE

Teen pregnancy prevention programs should teach young people to be married before they have a child.



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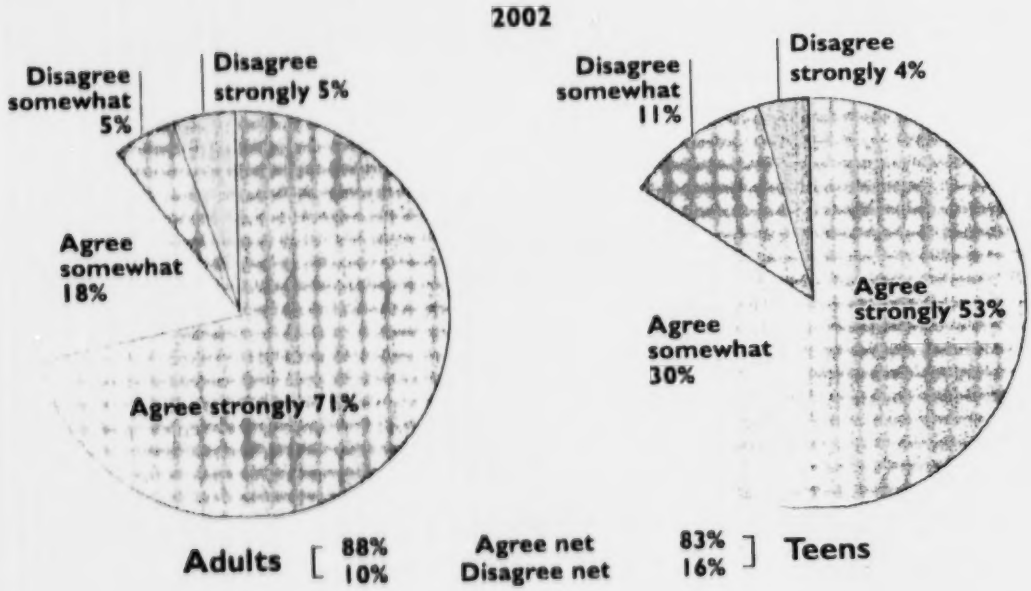
MEDIA:
CHART TWENTY TWO

I wish the media showed more or talked more about the consequences of sex, including teen pregnancy.



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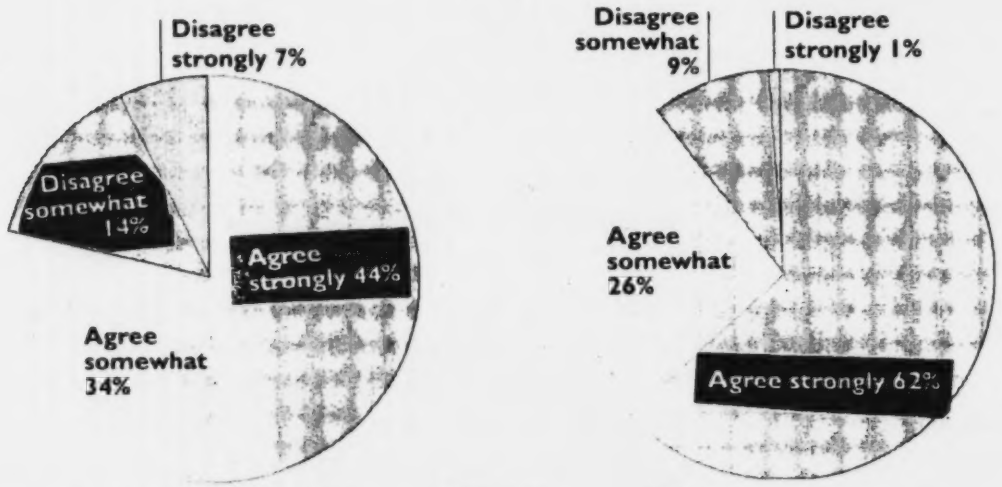
MEDIA:
CHART TWENTY TWO

(Continued)

2002



Teen males			Teen females
78%	Agree net	89%	
20%	Disagree net	10%	

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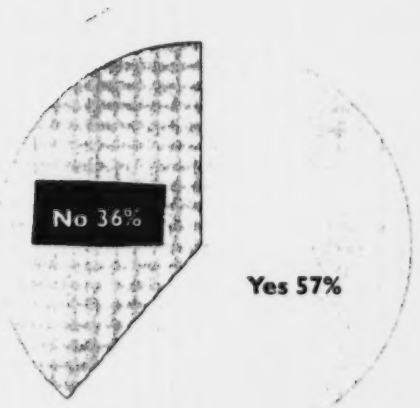
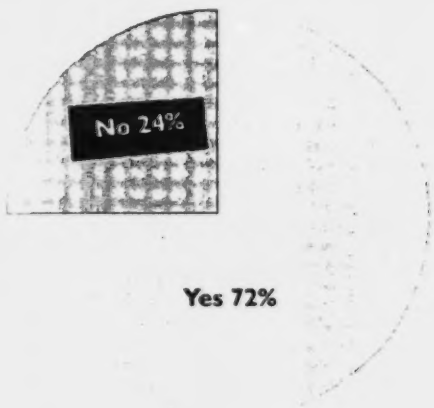
MEDIA:
CHART TWENTY THREE

Do you feel there has been more attention to teen pregnancy prevention in the news and entertainment media in the past few years?

2002



Adults



Teens

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